

The "Shimmy Dance"

Outlawed as a Dance but Highly Valuable as
a Personal Boudoir Exercise to Beautify

Shoulders
and
Necks



1—The First Movement of the "Up and Down Shake."

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NOT so very long ago that peculiar wriggling, jiggling dance called the "shimmy" attained a feverish popularity. Very soon, however, the public in general began to regard the "shimmy" with disfavor. Pulpits used it as a text to prove the present demoralization of manners. Recently the American National Association of Dancing Masters outlawed it, even going so far as to direct their members to expel all "shimmy" dancers from their halls.

As a public dance, the "shimmy" was undoubtedly vulgar. There is something good, nevertheless, in everything. Transfer the motions of the "shimmy" from the dance hall to the privacy of the boudoir, and, presto! Instead of the nefarious shakes there results an exercise entirely wholesome and beneficial.

The following exercises are merely the fundamental movements of the outlawed "shimmy," made legitimate by using them as boudoir exercises to beautify the neck and shoulders. At first—unless you have been a "shimmy" devotee—you will be surprised to discover that your shoulders refuse to move gracefully like those of the young women behind the footlights. Instead of grace and smoothness you will have only awkward jerks which will prove to you how stiff and weak from lack of exercise your muscles have become.

But do not despair. They can be strengthened and developed by persistence with the exercise. The hollows of the neck will be filled out, giving a more beautiful contour. In the case of stout persons the movements will aid in reducing. Round shoulders will be improved. The functions of respiration, circulation and digestion are assisted.

It seems a far cry from the "shimmy dance" to the pectoralis major, the sternocleidomastoid, latissimus dorsi and so forth; but these are the technical names of the muscles actively brought into play by the shimmy exercises.

In order to obtain the best possible results, practice the movements every morning just after arising, and every evening just before retiring. A few minutes, only ten or fifteen morning and night, will do the trick.

But remember that no exercise performed lazily and slouchily will have any actual value. All must be done with the "click, snap and precision" with which the soldier responds to commands in military drill. And they must be performed thoughtfully; one must know the purpose of each exercise and work with this thought uppermost.

Practising before a mirror and watching the play of the muscles helps one concentrate on the purpose. Pretend there is something pushing or pulling in an effort to keep you from moving your shoulders. Work against this imaginary weight and you will receive the maximum amount of benefit.

Now then, try the shimmy exercises—and don't forget to move very slowly and smoothly.

Exercise One.

The Up and Down Shake.

Position—Assume good standing or sitting position (see Figure A) with hands on hips, abdomen in, head up, chin in and shoulder blades flat.

Part 1—Turning the head to the left, raise the left shoulder as high as possible. (Figure One). Lower shoulder and turn head forward, simultaneously, to starting position—(Figure A). Do this four times, counting "one" for up movement, "and" for down movement, continuing "two and," "three and," "four and." Be careful that the left shoulder and hips remain absolutely quiet.

Part 2—Turning the head to the right raise right shoulder (Figure Four); turn head forward, and lower left shoulder. (Figure A). Do four times as part one, counting "one and," "two and," etc.

Part 3—Face forward and raise both shoulders as high as possible (Figure 3), then lower. Do four times.

Part 4—Each time that the shoulders are lowered, pull both down and slightly backward. This added backward pull increases the value of the exercise and is excellent for round shoulders.

2—The Second Movement of This Exercise, After Each Position Shown in Figure A Is Repeated for an Instant.



Now perform Part 1 once, counting "One and"; next Part 2, "Two and," then Part 3, "Three and." Repeat three times.

It is interesting to note the difference in ability to raise the shoulders. Some young ladies who have publicly performed the shimmy dances are so supple that they can raise their shoulders almost as high as their ears. They evidently have the same talent as the prizefighters who raise the shoulders high enough to protect the head from blows.

Exercise Two.

Forward and Backward Shake.

Position—Same as in Exercise One.

This movement is known as "lateral trunk twisting" and consists of turning the body from left to right. All the motion is in the upper part of the body. The shoulders swing forward and backward, but the hips remain perfectly quiet. All movement is from above the waistline. Think of the breast bone as a pivot and twist the body with this as a centre. Begin by swinging the right shoulder as far forward as possible and the left backward, counting "One."

Reverse and swing left shoulder forward and right backward, counting "And." Continue "Two and," "Three and," "Four and."

Now vary the exercises by making a small swinging movement instead of a large. Varying the size of the swing develops greater co-ordination and enables one to make large, small or medium-sized movements at will. In the dance the very smallest and most rapid motion is used.

Exercise Three.

Shoulder Circling Shake.

Position—Assume good standing or sitting position as in Exercise One, except that the arms should be extended sideways as shown in Figure B.

Part 1—With the right shoulder describe a circle by moving upward, backward, downward, forward. Be careful not to circle the arm instead of the shoulder. Let the arm remain quiet; let the shoulder do all the work. A lack of control will be evidenced by jerking and inability to describe a perfect circle. Make as large a circle with the shoulder as possible. Keep the hips quiet. Count "One and" for one rotation. Do four times in all.

Part 2—Repeat the same circling movement with the left shoulder four times.

Part 3—Do the same movement with both shoulders four times. Work with the shoulders, not with the arms. Keep the hips quiet.

When you have perfected this circling with as large movements as possible gradually lessen the size of the movement. Try performing very small circles. This is much more difficult. The "shimmy" artists make very small, rapid, but smooth circles. In attempting to do the circles to a faster rhythm be careful that the circles

Figure B—The Proper Position to Begin the Shimmy Exercise Three Called the Shoulder Circling Shake.



Figure A—The Proper Standing Position to Begin the Shimmy Exercises One and Two.

pickled peppers"—it results in dire confusion. Hence, it is best to practice "circling" very slowly until it can be done perfectly.

Exercise Four.

Combination Shake.

POSITION: Same as in EXERCISE ONE.

This is a combination of all the movements of the three exercises described above. The purpose of this arrangement is to develop a snappy, vigorous performance and smooth transition from one exercise to the other. Performing rhythmically and by count, avoid hesitation. Say the commands to yourself and respond to

them just as promptly as you would respond to the sharp military commands of an army officer or gymnasium director. Exercise Four consists of the first, second and third exercises performed for four counts each.

Up and Down.

Right shoulder: Up! Down! (one and).
Left shoulder: Up! Down! (two and).
Both: Up! Down! Up! Down! (three and, four and).

Forward and Backward.

Both: Forward! Back! (one and). Forward! Back! (two and). Repeat.

Circling.

Right shoulder: Circle! (one and).
Left shoulder: Circle! (two and).
Both: Circle! (three and). Circle! (four and).

This concludes the primary movements involved in the exercises. There are several others, but their value is very slight. One, however, is somewhat of a stunt, or contortionist's manoeuvre, and although it appears to be very simple it is extremely difficult. In the other exercises the trick is to keep the hips perfectly immovable, but it is reversed in this and the hips swing while the shoulders are immovable. With a slight swing move the hips for-



3—The Third Movement of the "Up and Down Shake" Showing How the Shoulders Are Lifted.



4—The Terminating Exercise Illustrating How the Shoulders Are Dropped and Pulled Backwards.

put some joy into the work by cranking up your phonograph and performing the movements to the tune of your favorite record. If you aren't particularly interested in physical culture the melody will add considerable interest and pleasure.

The four exercises are counted so that they may be executed to fox-trot music, which, of course, contains four beats to a measure. The count "one" is for the first two beats, and the count "and" is for the last two beats of the measure. Just turn on your latest fox-trot record and "you'll be surprised" to see how much fun you can get out of the physical culture version of the "shimmy."

The warm glow and healthy tired feeling resulting from the above exercises prove that the incorrigible "shimmy-sha-wobble"

is valuable as a beautifier even though impossible as a dance. Although the dance has proved itself a bane to society, the exercise may prove a boon since it promotes health and efficiency, two factors vital to society. May the troublesome dance lose itself permanently in home or gymnasium, never again to endanger that precious sense of decorum which thinking Americans have always instilled into the minds of their children!

Who is to blame for the "shimmy" fad, with its shrugs and shakes? Not the anemic young miss of the poem who was always so cold that she shivered and learned to do it gracefully. Nor was it our colored folks of New Orleans, the hula-hula dancer, the Spanish senorita or the French vamp. The music called jazz was responsible for it. The "shimmy" as a dance is to the real dancing as the jazz is to real music. That is, it is no more a dance than "jazz" is music.

But admitting then that jazz music and the "shimmy" are so intimately related, it follows that if you want to do these exercises with music the jazz music is the kind to do them with.

One song writer frankly admits the connection between jazz and jiggles:

"There's something in the tone of a saxophone
That makes me do a little wiggle
All my own."

Another famous one advises us as follows:

Shake your little shoulders,
Do a little motion
Like the wavy ocean.

Or the shaking, shivery strains of the ghost melody:

"There's a strain of melody that haunts me,
Listen to that ghostly melody.
Long ago I heard it in the 'cello's
soulful moan,
Soft and low it wailed from out a
mournful saxophone."

Other songs bear such interesting statements as "Shimmy and rest your feet!" "Listen to the trombone slidin' out a n'wafu moan." "The devil he walks in with a smile, doing the jelly roll down the aisle," etc., etc.

If the outlawed dance will just be content to stay in its proper place as an exercise, women ought to be grateful to it—no matter how it came about. If one wants to vary it a little ingenuity will teach how to adopt the same motions to the hips and legs. They will prove to be most excellent reducers of hips and thighs. But this can come later after the shoulder movements are thoroughly mastered.

Try these basic motions in your boudoir before your mirror and watch the improvement in your neck and shoulders.

"She believed in scientific shoulder shaking," wrote Miss Dewey upon this photograph of a friend—"and that's how she got these shoulders. Persistent exercise will produce others like them."

